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ABSTRACT

Designed for adult basic education students at a fifth- to eighth-grade level, these materials explain the use of oral history as a means of learning about the past as well as improving student motivation, communication skills, and attitudes toward learning. Each of the eight chapters in the teacher's guide contains a vocabulary list, objectives, summary, and recommended teaching methods. The eight parallel chapters in the student guide present information at an appropriate reading level and give directions for learning activities. Chapter topics are choosing a subject, interviewing, taking notes, using the tape recorder, transcribing, composing the first draft, editing, and preparing the final product. (SK)

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LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST THROUGH PEOPLE

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AN ORAL HISTORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Student Materials

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LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST THROUGH PEOPLE

AN ORAL HISTORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

5 TO 8 GRADE LEVEL

Developed by:

Donna Zellers
and
Dr. Robert W. Zellers

TO THE TEACHER

"Oral history is nothing more than a branch of historical research. In that context it is the offspring of history's most ancient techniques and its most modern technology. Its technique is the eyewitness accounts to history; the ancient Greek historians did this more than two thousand years ago. Its technology, the compact tape recorder, is as modern as the space age."[1]

Oral history was launched in 1938, by Columbia University historian Allan Nevins. In the beginning, prominent subjects were interviewed formally but that has now changed. "As history has moved toward social history, ordinary people are being interviewed, anonymous Americans whose story would be lost without it." The collection and preservation of the oral history, folklore, and folklife of an area is popularly known as the "Foxfire" concept.

The structured interviews or informal conversations with persons of historical significance in the local community can be preserved as oral history by using a cassette tape recorder. This procedure has the added instructional value of involving students on a firsthand basis in gathering historical data. And if good classroom preparation precedes the interview, students may complete taped interviews of a quality that can become a part of a collection of local history materials.

The purpose of these materials is to provide instruction to ABE students (5-8 grade level) on using the oral history approach to gather information about the past. Since its original inception, this method has been altered, improved, expanded, modified and used in various types of school settings. The approach has proved to be extremely successful with all types of students. There has been evidence of an inner self-motivation as the learner becomes totally immersed in the subjects and the people that he/she chooses to investigate. As a result, there is a long term retention of the subject matter, a marked improvement in communication skills, and a positive improvement in the student's attitude toward learning.

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[1] Davis, Cullom, Kathryn Back, Kay MacLean. Oral History From Tape to Type. Chicago: American Library Association, 1977.

The complete set of materials for *Learning About Our Past Through People* includes a student manual, a teacher's guide, and an audio cassette. There are 8 chapters in the student manual which lead the student through the process of identification of a subject or subject matter, interview techniques, use of the tape recorder, note taking, transcribing, composition of the story, editing, proofing and final publication. Each chapter is arranged so that it builds upon knowledge attained in a previous chapter. Exhibited in the manual are articles which were written by students. The curriculum provides a variety of activities and experiences through which the learner can integrate his/her writing with other aspects of his/her schooling.

The teacher's guide deals with the content found in the student materials. The cassette tape is a means to orally explain the approach to the student and give first hand recordings of actual interviews. It will systematically explain the process which is outlined in the student manual and it will support and reinforce many of the materials therein. It also has the added benefit of being an excellent aid for the student who has poor reading skills. It is intended to be an illustrating and motivating feature of the total learning package.

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CHAPTER 1

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

VOCABULARY:

interview, unique, relative, comfortable, oral history, conduct, encyclopedia.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter will identify and suggest interesting and unique subjects and people to be interviewed.
- This chapter will introduce methods and procedures to be used in contacting the person to be interviewed.
- This chapter will suggest ways of researching the topic related to the interview.

SUMMARY:

The intention of this chapter is to inspire the student by discussing and choosing an interesting person to interview. By reviewing the occupation and hobby lists, you can help the student to think about people in his/her own world who might have an occupation or hobby which would make an interesting topic for the interview. This chapter also will prepare the student to make the initial contact for the interview and to conduct the research necessary on the topic of the interview.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Review the occupation lists with the students and elicit ideas from them about people they know who might fit into one of the categories.
- Ask for suggestions from the students as to other interesting occupations or hobbies that might not be listed in the book.
- The students who have already found a subject to interview might relate their process of selection to the rest of the class.

• Discuss the process for contacting the person to be interviewed and for arranging the interview.

• Present examples of resource materials to the student when discussing the importance of being informed about the topic of the interview before actually conducting that interview.

CHAPTER 2

INTERVIEWING

VOCABULARY:

information, encourage, concentrate, grammar, anxious, recorded, success.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter should make the student aware of the fact that listening carefully is an important component of a good interview.

- This chapter will emphasize the importance of using the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why** in order to help the student to collect as much information about the topic as possible.

- This chapter will stress the importance of having questions prepared in advance of the interview.

SUMMARY:

The intention of this chapter is to indicate to the student that one of the most important aspects of interviewing is **listening**. While listening, the student should be aware of the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why** so that he/she can elicit as much information as possible about the topic. The student needs to be made aware of the importance of having some questions prepared prior to the actual interview in order to be able to elicit responses from a person who may not be very talkative.

One of the purposes of this chapter is to give the student confidence in his/her task by practicing interview techniques with a fellow classmate. Through this comfortable exchange, the student will learn to listen carefully and ask pertinent questions in order to achieve the information necessary for a complete interview product.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Impress upon the students that although they will be aided by notes and a tape recorder; most information will be gained from the interview through active listening.

• Explain the importance of memorizing the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why**.

• Emphasize the importance of practicing the interview before hand with a classmate in order to make the first real interview go more smoothly.

• Have some of the students conduct an interview with a classmate in front of the class and then have the class critique the methods used.

• Ask some of the students to read the information that they obtained through the practice interview and then have others in the class decide if more information could have been gained.

CHAPTER 3

TAKING NOTES

VOCABULARY:

memorize, complete, tape recorder.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter should develop note taking skills.
- This chapter will emphasize the importance of the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why**.
- This chapter should develop the student's self confidence by practicing note taking through the exercise of reading a story and taking notes.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this chapter is to give students practice in taking notes while keeping in mind the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why**. The students will learn how to listen for specific information and to take notes in order to remember that information. During this chapter, the students will learn to take notes from a written passage in order to become aware of information that would fall into one of the six key word categories.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Emphasize that effective listening during an interview is supplemented by good note taking.
- This chapter would be enhanced by the use of an overhead projector. Using the projector, write a sample form for the six key words in a column format with spaces between the words. Fill in those spaces with the class in reference to the story in the manual or an interview conducted by one of the students.
- Read a story to the class and have them write down information about that story as you read. The students can then share that information with the rest of the class.

CHAPTER 4

THE TAPE RECORDER

VOCABULARY:

relative, cassette tape, various, functions, volume, microphone, close range.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter will demonstrate to the student the various uses of a tape recorder.
- This chapter will emphasize the importance of being prepared with extra batteries or an adapter/cord so that the recorder can continue to function if the batteries run down.
- This chapter will demonstrate the importance of using a microphone for a better quality sample in the process of recording.
- This chapter will stress the importance of being familiar with the recorder before undertaking the first interview.
- This chapter will inform the student of the problem of over recording.
- This chapter will make the student aware that it is important to ask permission before using a tape recorder during an interview.

SUMMARY:

This chapter will give the student the necessary skills in order to use the tape recorder successfully. The student, after practice, will feel comfortable with the various functions of his/her tape recorder, especially with the pause switch and the volume control. The student will also be aware of the importance of arriving at his/her interview location well prepared, both in terms of equipment and knowledge of that equipment. Finally, the student will be reminded of the proper etiquette in conducting an interview.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Be prepared with a tape recorder and a blank tape in order to offer the student the opportunity to practice with the functions of the machine.

• Practice using the microphone, adjusting the volume, using the pause function, etc.

• Have the students conduct several short interviews with each other with the use of the tape recorder.

CHAPTER 5

TRANSCRIBING

VOCABULARY:

transcribe, create, remind, expressions, first draft.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter should develop the student's ability to transcribe information from notes and/or from the tape recorder to an organized written form.
- This chapter will show the student how to organize his/her collected information into an order pertinent to writing a first draft.
- This chapter will show the student how to create a format for transcribing.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this chapter is to facilitate the student's acquisition of the knowledge needed to transcribe information from notes and a tape recorder to an organized written form. Organizing from notes is a synthesis skill, in which one makes judgements as to the order of presentation of information for effective communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It may be a helpful learning experience to use one of the student's notes and tape of a practice interview. The sample form in chapter 5 could be put on a transparency and projected onto a screen so that all class members could work together to organize the information into the appropriate categories.
- Communicate to the student that this is the first step in organized writing and is not meant to be a finished product.
- Some of the students may need help in making decisions as to the order of information. This also can be achieved by using the overhead projector and prepared materials.

CHAPTER 6

COMPOSITION OF THE STORY
THE FIRST DRAFT

VOCABULARY:

organize, sequence, correspond, edit.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter should develop the understanding that organized writing begins by placing information in a logical sequence.

- This chapter will re-enforce the importance of the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why** in the organizing of the written material.

- This chapter will emphasize that spelling and grammar are not important at this point of the student's writing.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the student's ability to organize the information that he/she has obtained into a first draft form of the final written product. The editing of the material will be addressed in the next chapter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to use the overhead projector to show the student how to organize his/her writing.

- Create several first draft compositions with the students using information that has been transcribed from a taped interview or from notes taken during an interview.

CHAPTER 7

EDITING

VOCABULARY:

concern, vocabulary, grammar, arrange, grammatically, dictionary, misspelled, specific, usage, punctuation.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter will emphasize that in order to have clear coherent writing, the student must now be concerned with spelling, vocabulary and grammar.
- This chapter will stress the importance of using a dictionary.
- This chapter will accentuate the importance of using appropriate vocabulary.
- This chapter will emphasize that writing can be made more interesting by using a variety of words and by not using the same word too often.
- This chapter will develop the student's ability to arrange words in a standard and grammatically accepted way.

SUMMARY:

The intention of this chapter is to develop the students' ability to edit their writing for spelling, vocabulary and usage. Editing for spelling involves both the ability to identify words in writing which might be misspelled and the ability to check the spelling of a word through the use of a dictionary. Editing for vocabulary involves the ability to identify words that make communication unclear or words that are used too often, and to substitute different or more clear words. In this chapter, the student will practice th skills of editing for spelling, grammar and usage through the re-writing of the story, "Grandmother Tallentire."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Have several dictionaries available for the students to use in checking words for spelling.

• Review the use of a dictionary, reminding the students about **key words, entry words,** etc.

• If appropriate, the use of a thesaurus may be introduced.

• Give a word to the students and ask them to think of other words that mean the same thing.

• With the overhead projector, practice rearranging sentence order, etc.

CHAPTER 8

THE FINAL PRODUCT

VOCABULARY:

product, account, record, role, society, opportunity, arise, in regards to, word processor, keyboard, photocopy, permanent, cultural, identification, inspire, traditions, generation.

OBJECTIVES:

- This chapter will emphasize the importance of creating a permanent record of a unique aspect of history.
- This chapter will suggest the advantages of typing the final draft.
- This chapter will emphasize the importance of making extra copies of the final draft of the story.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this chapter is to increase the students' awareness of the importance of creating a permanent record of their oral history project. The chapter also stresses that the explorations that take place during the oral history project can teach the students many things about life and can be an important part of their social and personal growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Discuss with the students their feelings upon completion of the oral history project.
- Ask several of the students to read their final product to the class.
- Ask the students about other projects that they may be planning on undertaking.

LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST THROUGH PEOPLE

AN ORAL HISTORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

STUDENT MATERIALS

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AN ORAL HISTORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT

Our culture is made up of objects, skills, or ideas that have been handed down to us from the past. People with different skills are part of our heritage or culture. Many people have interesting stories to tell and skills to show us and we want to make certain that these things are not forgotten when these people pass on. Therefore, it is important to record some of these cultural experiences in order to share them with other people in the future. Through this program, you will learn how to obtain that information about people with special skills. You will learn also how to write that information in the form of a story that can be saved and shared with other people. As you learn this, you will become a better listener, speaker, reader, and writer. And while doing this, you will please someone else by showing them that you are interested in their talents, hobbies or vocations.

Think about the people in your family or in your community. Can you think of anyone who has a job that has always interested you? Do you know a blacksmith, or a train conductor or perhaps a coal miner? You may know a family member (grandfather, grandmother, aunt, etc.) who has a hobby that you find exciting. Maybe someone in your neighborhood repairs clocks or makes quilts or even tells great stories!

The purpose of these materials is to increase your awareness of history while improving your writing and reading skills. The end result of this oral history experience will be a story that you have written that tells about an interesting aspect of history.The materials have been developed so that you will be personally involved in the subject about which you are going to write. After completing these materials, you should have a greater knowledge of certain aspects of history (particularly history in your region) and you should be able to write more easily and more clearly.

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CHAPTER 1

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

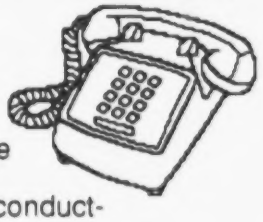
Choosing a person to interview means finding someone who has a special talent that would be interesting to hear more about. You may want to choose someone who is older when things were not as they are today or someone who is unique in some way. Unique means someone or something that stands out in a group because of a special difference. You may choose a relative if that makes you more comfortable or a friend or someone that you've heard about. Usually people are very happy to talk about their special skill or talent when there is someone interested in what they are saying.

Below is a list of some unique people that may give you an idea about who you would like to interview. When you read this list, you may think of a person you know that has these talents or a you may know a person with a talent that is not on this list. You do not need to choose a topic from this list. Consider looking in the newspaper, magazines or other sources for a good idea. Choosing the person that you will interview is the first step in your oral history project.

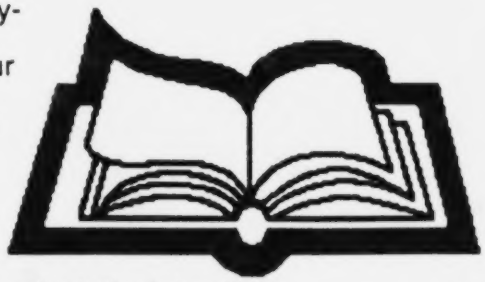
Actor
Animal caretaker
Announcer
Architect
Art teacher
Artist
Bicycle repairer
Bird trapper
Boat rigger
Boilermaker
Bread maker
Bulldozer operator
Butcher
Cabinetmaker
Cemetery worker
Chimney sweep
Christmas tree farmer
Clown
Coach
Coal miner
Comedian
Construction worker
Cooper
Crane operator
Day care worker
Die maker
Disk jockey
Dog groomer
Dog catcher
Dressmaker
Engraver
Etcher

Farmworker
Firefighter
Fish hatchery worker
Fisherman
Florist
Forest worker
Fortune teller
Funeral director
Garbage collector
Gun maker
Horseshoer
Housewife
Hunter/trapper
Jeweler
Logger
Magician
Makeup artist
Mechanic
Medicine man
Metal molder
Milliner
Mime
Midwife
Miner
Model maker
Mold maker
Narrator
Newspaper reporter
Newscaster
Painter
Patternmaker
Photographer
Printer
Printmaker
Puppeteer
Quilt maker
Radio repairer
Repairman
Roofer
Sandblaster
School administrator
Scuba diver
Sculptor
Seamstress
Sheep shearer
Sheriff
Silversmith
Stained glass artist
Stencil cutter
Stone carver
Tailor
Tattoo artist
Taxicab driver
Taxidermist
Teacher
Train engineer
Truck driver
Ventriloquist

Once you have decided on the person you want to interview, you will need to talk to him or her about the possibility of conducting an interview. There are several ways in which you can speak to the person about the interview. Using the telephone is one way. Sometimes, it is better to go to the person and talk to him about your project and what you are planning to do in your class. Many people are hesitant about being interviewed if they do not know what you plan to do with the information. If you go to the person's house or place of business and talk to him personally, he is more likely to understand your wishes and is more likely to agree to be interviewed. Tell the person that you are a member of a class that is conducting interviews with people who have interesting talents or knowledge. Tell him that you think his talent is very special. Be polite and arrange a time for the interview that is the most convenient for the person.



Once you have received permission for the interview and have set up a time, you need to find out more about the person's talent before you meet with him or her. One of the best sources for finding this information is an encyclopedia. You may have a set of encyclopedias in your home or there may be a set where your adult education class is held. The library in your town or in one of the schools in your community will have one or more sets of encyclopedias. Reading about the topic before you conduct the interview will help you to better understand what the person is telling you.



Now that you have chosen your subject, you may be anxious to begin your interview. But first you need to know how to go about talking with your chosen person in order to conduct a good interview. In a good interview, you will collect all the information you will need to write an interesting story. Chapter 2 will lead you along that path.

CHAPTER 2

INTERVIEWING

When you interview a person, your purpose is to collect information from that person. You find out information by asking questions and listening to the answers. You may only need to ask a few questions to encourage the person to talk about the things you want to know. Usually, people enjoy talking about their talents and will continue to give you information even when you're not asking questions. Others are shy or timid and it may take more time for them to feel comfortable enough to talk. In this case, you will have to rely on questions you have prepared ahead of time to keep them talking.

In order to practice interviewing, ask someone in your class or a friend to be your partner. Now, follow these steps:

Ask Ask your partner to tell you about something she likes to do. It can be a job or a hobby. Perhaps it's sewing, shoeing horses, quilting, fishing or making guns. Ask her to describe the activity, what she likes about doing it, and anything else she would like to say about it.

Listen Now as your partner tells you about her hobby, listen carefully to what she has to say about it. Listen to the information she gives you and also watch her face to determine what she gets really excited about. Perhaps it is special because she has been doing this for a long time. Or, perhaps she is very good at this hobby or skill.

Write After your partner has finished talking, write down everything you can remember about the discussion. Don't worry about your grammar or your spelling. We will discuss that later. Now, try to decide what it is about the job or hobby that makes it really special for your partner. Underline this part of your writing.

Read Read what you have written about your partner's interest. Read it to your partner. Ask her if you have left out anything that she said. If so, write it at the end of your paper. Next, tell your partner what you have underlined and ask her if you are correct. If not, have your partner tell you what is special; write it down and underline it.

Answer Try answering the six questions: **who, what, how, where, when and why**. Use the information you have written to find these answers.

Who are you interviewing.
What is the hobby or special skill.
How is it done.
Where is it done.
When did it begin.
Why is it so special.

Were you able to answer all six questions? A good listener can do this. If you missed any information necessary to answer these questions you'll need to be more careful when listening. Perhaps you need to ask more questions in order to encourage your partner to tell more about her skill. This often takes practice. In the next chapter we will talk about the things you can do to help you to remember what you hear.

You will probably be very anxious about your first interview. You may be uncomfortable at first, most people are, but soon you will feel the excitement that comes with talking

to a person about her skill that will one day be a recorded part of history. You should be proud that you were part of that process.

However, before you conduct your first interview, there are a few more skills you need to have so that your interview is a success. The ability to take good notes is one of those skills and we will talk about that in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

TAKING NOTES

When you conduct an interview, you should write some notes down to help you remember what has been said. The information which is needed to write an interesting story will answer the questions: **who, what, how, where, when and why**. Look at these words carefully so that you can recall them from memory. In this way, you will always have them in mind when you are interviewing.

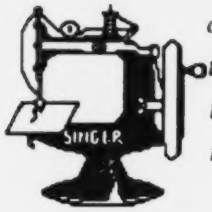
Let's practice by reading a story written by a student about someone's special interest. Afterwards, we will take notes on what we have read. This will help you to think about and listen for the six key words (**who, what, how, where, when and why**) as you interview.

On a piece of paper, write the six key words that you have memorized. Leave a few lines after each word. Now read the information below about Ethel's special interest. As you read this passage, write down the answers to these key words in the space.

I began quilting when I was a little girl. Before I even went to school, I would sit with my mother by the fireplace and sew with needle and thread on little scraps of material that she had left over. You had to make your stitches small and spaced just right if you wanted to have a nice quilt. I learned that from watching my mother and grandmother. As I got older, my scrap of material became bigger and bigger until finally my mother gave me a small quilt to do all by myself. I was so excited!

There wasn't television in those days and since we lived out in the country, I didn't have anyone to play with me. I was glad to be able to sit next to mother and keep busy.

I'm 72 years old now and I have made about 100 quilts. I still enjoy



doing them although my eyesight is poor and I need bright light to be able to see. Now I only quilt during the day when the light is better. I think quilting is very relaxing for me and I plan to make a lot more quilts before I die.

Now write the answers to the six key words in the spaces beside each word. Check your paper. Were you able to answer all of the questions?

Who - Ethel is a 72 year old woman.

What - Her special interest is quilting.

How - She uses a needle, thread and material.

Where - She quilts at home.

When - She began quilting when she was a little girl and has been quilting for many years.

Why - Ethel likes to quilt because it is relaxing.

Read the story again and add more information to your notes if you need to. Remember not to worry about spelling or punctuation for now. We will correct that later.

Sometimes in an interview you need to know more about something than a person is telling you. Think about the story that you just read and write down at least four more things you would like to know about Ethel or about quilting. For example, you might want to know if Ethel has a favorite quilt or if she's taught anyone to quilt. Write the other questions you might have down on your paper.

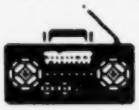
You've practiced how to find the answers to the six key words: **who, what, how, where, when and why**. You've learned how to write this information down by taking notes. And, you have also learned that you need to ask other questions in order to make the story complete. With practice, you will become good at doing this. There is another way to help

you to get information and remember it. This approach is by using a tape recorder when you interview. That's what we will talk about in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

THE TAPE RECORDER

So far you have learned that in order to remember the information that you received from someone in an interview, you will need to take good notes. You can also use a tape



recorder to help you recall what someone tells you. You will need to get a tape recorder for this part of your project. If you don't have a tape recorder, you may be able to borrow one from a friend or a relative. You will also need a cassette tape that runs for 60 or 90 minutes.

Most people know how to use a tape recorder. If you have never used one before, ask someone in your class to show you how to perform the various functions on a tape recorder. Perhaps, you are already experienced in using the tape recorder. In either case, there are some important things you need to remember before you set out to use the tape recorder on your interviews.

• **Know your machine**. Tape recorders can be very different. Practice with yours before you go on your first interview. Do you have to adjust the volume level or does it adjust itself? Is your microphone clear at close range but not at a distance? These are some of the questions that you will want to have answered **before** you use your tape recorder on an interview.

• **Check your equipment**. Make sure you have batteries that work. Take along extra batteries. It is helpful if the tape recorder has an adapter/cord so it can be plugged into the wall outlet when possible. Do you have the microphone with you if your tape recorder is equipped with one? It is better if the tape recorder has a microphone that is not built into the recorder. If the recorder is sitting right in front of the person being interviewed it could be fine, but if the person is moving around it might not be as effective. Do you have a good tape? Perhaps an extra tape will be needed.

When you use the tape recorder in your interview, say your name, the date, and who you are going to interview at the beginning of the tape. For example, "I am Leroy Hatcher, this is February 7, 1989, and I am talking to John Walker." And remember, always ask the person's permission before you use the tape recorder.

CHAPTER 5

TRANSCRIBING

Transcribing means writing down the information that you have on the tape from your interview. You will not want to write down everything as it is on the tape. You will only write the important things that you may have missed when you took notes during the interview.

Let's examine transcribing step by step:

Create a written or printed form to use when transcribing. Look at the form on the next page which a student made to help him write down information from his interview. You will find that it is very helpful to have this each time you conduct an interview. It will also help you when you are transcribing the information that you have on the tape recorder from your interview. This transcribing form helped the student to remember the things that he might want to add and later the form helped him to write down the information from the tape recording in the correct places.

INTERVIEW FORM

Your name:
Name of person being interviewed:
Date:
• Who
• What
• How
• Where
• When
• Why

Read the notes from your interview. Did you remember to keep the six key words in mind (**who, what, how, where, when and why**) when you did this? If you left out some information in your notes, you may find that you have that information on your cassette tape.

Listen to the tape. As you listen, keep your six key words in mind. When you hear something that reminds you of one of those key words, stop the tape (push **pause** or **stop**) and write that information in the correct space on your interview form.

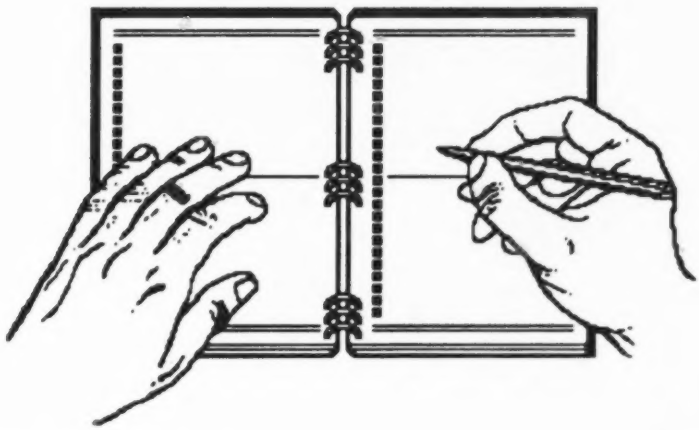
Listen again You may hear something the second time that you missed. As you listen this time, think about what the person you interviewed looked like. Also think about what kind of expressions she used; that is, did she move her hands, did she smile a lot, did she tap her foot or jiggle her leg. This will help you to write down some more information about the person in the interview that you would like others to know about. Don't worry if this information does not seem to fit into one of the six key word spaces. Write it down at the bottom of your paper. Now you are ready for the next step of your project, writing the first draft of the story.

CHAPTER 6

COMPOSITION OF THE STORY

THE FIRST DRAFT

You must put your material in an organized manner in order to be able to write it so that other people can understand what you are telling them. On the next page is an example of a completed interview form that a student created for an oral history project. The student interviewed his grandmother by taking notes and using a tape recorder. Later, the student listened to the tape and wrote down the information that corresponded to the six key words in the spaces on the interview form. Then he transcribed the information into written form, creating the first draft of the story. Look at his notes carefully.



Your name: Henry Tallentire

Name of person being interviewed: Grandmother

Date: March 12, 1989

- **Who** - Grandmother Tallentire. Very old. Won't tell her age. Gray hair in bun. House dress. Stockings rolled down to ankles. Hard shoes, Grandfather likes to tell stories.

- **What** - Canning vegetables at home. Never buys in store. Working in coal mine. Coal and coke. Company store. No electricity. No bathroom.

- **How** - Big, black coal stove. Uses glass jars, rings, lids, canner, stove. Picks vegetables from garden. Wash, clean, prepare. Break beans, skin beets.

- **Where** - Lemont Furnace. Called "patch." Used to be coal place. 20 houses in community. Big kitchen.

- **When** - Summer and fall. Mostly when the garden has lots of vegetables. Start in morning and work all day.

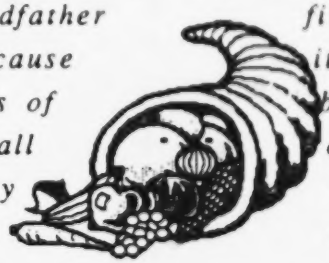
- **Why** - Tastes better. Likes to do it. Always did it that way. Likes money.

Look at the six key words from the interview form. Which information do you think would make a good beginning for the story? Probably, the information that is next to who is the best way to start the writing. Read again the notes taken for the six key information words. Now read the first draft of the story. Can you see where the **who, what, how, where, when,** and **why** information is written?

My Grandmother Tallentire is very old but she won't say how much. Her hair is gray and thin and she wars it in a bun. She wars a flowered house dress. It is loose and It looks comfortible. She wars nilon stockings rolled down to her ankles. She wars hard shoes.

Sitting on the porch with grandmother is my Grandfather Tallentire. He is retired now but he used to work in the coal mine. He tells me that it was very hard work with long hours and you were never paid very much . They were bad times, he says, when there was war and depression. Sometimes you were not paid at all but were given credit at the "company store". The coal company owned the company store which sold everything that you needed. So you didn't need money if you had credit at the store. He says that children often worked in the mines too. He asks me if I know the difference between coal and coke. I tell him that coal is hard and black and that coke is something you drink. So he goes into the house and brings out a can of coke, a piece or hard, shiny, black coal, and a piece of coke (what is left after coal is burned). He says now I will know the difference between Coca-Cola and the coke that is part of mining coal.

My Grandmother Tallentire cans all of her own vegtables. She still uses a big black stove that grandfather fills with coal. She says she likes to use the coal stove because it gets very hot and she is used to it. She uses big pots of boiling water. There are glass jars and lids and rings all over the kitchen She never goes to the store to buy vegtables. She picks the vegtables from her garden and cleans them. Then she cuts or skins them.



The summer and fall are when my grandmother cans the vegtables. That is when the vegtables are all getting rype. She starts in the morning. She works all day.

The kitchen is big. They live in Lemont Furnace. That is a small town that used to be full of coal but there isn't coal there anymore. There are

about 20 houses there. You can still see the company store building there.

They call Lemont Furnace the "patch."

Grandmother Tallentire says she cans her vegtables because she likes the way they tast. She likes money too. She says she likes doing it even when it takes all day. She has always done it that way.

As you read the story, you probably noticed that there were some mistakes in spelling. You may also have thought that some of the sentences were not very clear. We will correct these errors during the **editing** part of our program.

Now you can see how you use notes, the tape recorder, and transcribing to write the first draft of a story. Write the first draft of your story. Do not worry about spelling, vocabulary or grammar (the way you put words together) at this time. We will talk about that in our next chapter which is **editing**.

CHAPTER 7

EDITING

So far you have learned how to choose your subject, how to interview, how to take notes, how to tape and transcribe, and how to organize your notes into the first draft of the story. Until now, you have not been concerned with spelling, vocabulary, or grammar. However, if you want other people to understand your writing when they read the story, you will want to be sure that your writing is clear and that it makes sense. So you will want to choose words that mean what you want them to mean, spell them correctly and arrange those words in a grammatically correct way. This is called **editing**.

To edit for spelling you will need a dictionary. Even people who write often, and who write well, may use a dictionary every time they are writing. It is very important to have your words spelled correctly in the final draft of your story. Using a dictionary, go back to the story about canning vegetables and write down the words that you think are not spelled correctly. Did you find these words: wars, **comfortible, nilon, vegtables, rype, kichen, and tast.** Look up the correct spelling for these words in a dictionary. In your notebook, write the correct spelling next to the words that are misspelled. The correct spelling for the words spelled incorrectly in the story are: **wars-wears, comfortible-comfortable, nilon-nylon, vegtables-vegetables, rype-ripe, kichen-kitchen, and tast-taste.**

The next step in creating the final draft of your story is to edit for **vocabulary**. It is important that you use words that mean exactly what you want them to mean. It is also important that you do not use the same words too often. So, editing for vocabulary means

checking to see that your writing is **clear** (saying exactly what you want to say) and **interesting** (not using the same words too often).

Look at the first draft of the story written by a student about Grandmother Tallentire. Let's edit the writing for vocabulary. Read the writing aloud and circle any words that you think might not say exactly what the writer meant them to say. In the first sentence "she won't say how much" is not clear when speaking about Grandmother Tallentire's age. "She wears hard shoes" is probably not clear. Perhaps her shoes were sturdy or heavy rather than hard. In the fifth paragraph, the town was not "full of coal" but was probably an active coal mining town in the past. And in the last paragraph, "she likes money too" probably means she likes to save money. Each of these words or phrases needs to be changed to make the vocabulary clear.

There are several ways to use vocabulary in a more clear way. One way is to think of a different way to write what you are trying to say. "She won't say how much" would be more clear if written, "she won't tell how old she really is."

Another way to make vocabulary more clear is to think of a more specific word for the unclear one. As in "hard shoes" a more specific way to describe Grandmother Tallentire's shoes is to say, "sturdy shoes." In the fifth paragraph a town "full of coal" is described. This would be more clearly stated as "an active coal town." Finally, in the last paragraph "she likes money too" is not specific enough. You need to let your readers know that she likes to save money by canning vegetables.

You will also want to make sure that your writing is interesting. When you use the same word too often, your writing may sound choppy and dull. It is also more interesting to combine short, choppy sentences with words such as: **and, but, or, also, that, therefore,**

thus, and **so**. Read the story about Grandmother Tallentire again. Are there some words that are used too often? Can you combine some of the sentences with one of the joining words above? Look at the third and fourth sentence in the story. "She wears a flowered house dress. It is loose and it looks comfortable." Rewrite the story changing some of the words that are repeated often with other words (use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the joining words listed above.

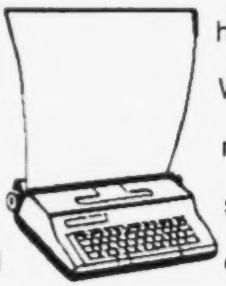
The last step in editing your writing is to edit it for usage. This means that the words you use should be arranged in a standard or accepted way. It also means that you will use the correct forms of punctuation such as the comma (,), period (.), question mark (?), apostrophe ('), and quotation marks (" "). Using capital letters in the correct places is also an important part of editing for usage.

Now rewrite the story about Grandmother Tallentire, editing it for spelling, vocabulary and usage. Use paper from your notebook to do this.

CHAPTER 8

THE FINAL PRODUCT

The final product of your oral history project is a unique journal containing an account of a part of history that you found interesting and worth recording. In today's changing world, there is a great need for people to take time to record something about families, traditions and hobbies. This helps people to gain a sense of themselves and the role they play in our society.



Once you have completed a hand written copy of your story you may want to make a typed copy. Who will do the typing? The best answer to that question is **you**. The more skills you learn through this and other projects, the more you will be skilled to deal with opportunities that may arise in regards to jobs and other activities in which you become interested. Now is as good a time as any to learn the skill of typing or using a word processor keyboard. You will also want to make extra copies of your story. You can make photocopies of your story to give to your teacher, classmates, and the person that you interviewed. One typed copy of your story should be filed away carefully as a permanent record.

Think of your story as being a cultural bridge to the past. This experience should have given you a feeling of identification with the lifestyle and values of the people who have lived in a time that you have not. We can think about the differences in the way people live today compared to the experiences of older people. We can learn from these experiences of the past and the people who were part of that time. Perhaps this project will inspire you to continue recording the rich traditions and experiences that our older generation has to offer. In that way, you are an important part of that bridge that brings the past and the present together to be explored. That exploration can teach us many things about

life and can be an important part of our social and personal growth.

Below is the final product of Henry Tallentire's interview with his grandmother.

My Grandmother Tallentire is very old but she won't say just how old she really is. Her hair is thin and gray and she wears it in a bun. She wears a flowered house dress that is loose and comfortable. On her legs are nylon stockings that are rolled down to her ankles. Grandmother always wears sturdy shoes.

Grandmother Tallentire cans all of her own vegetables. The kitchen is big. She still uses a big black stove that grandfather fills with coal. She says she likes to use the coal stove because it gets very hot and she is used to it. She uses big pots of boiling water. There are glass jars and lids and rings all over the kitchen. She never goes to the store to buy vegetables. She picks the vegetables from her garden and cleans them, then she cuts or skins them.

In the summer and fall are when my grandmother cans the vegetables. That is when the vegetables are all getting ripe. She starts in the morning and she works all day.

Grandmother Tallentire says she cans her vegetables because she likes the way they taste. She also likes to save money by canning her own vegetables. She says she likes doing it even when it takes all day because she has always done it that way.

Sitting on the porch with grandmother is my Grandfather Tallentire. He is retired now but he used to work in the coal mine. Grandfather tells me that it was very hard work with long hours and low pay. They were bad times, he says, when there was war and depression. He says that children often worked in the mines too. Sometimes he was not paid at all but was given credit at the "company store". The coal company owned the company store which sold everything that was needed. So he didn't need money if he had credit at the store.

Grandfather Tallentire asks me if I know the difference between coal and coke. I tell him that coal is hard and black and that coke is something you drink. So he goes into the house and brings out a can of coke, a piece or hard, shiny, black coal, and a piece of coke (what is left after coal is burned). He says now I will know the difference between Coca-Cola and the coke that is a by-product of mining coal. He asks me if I can imagine living in a house

without electricity. He tells me about how everyone had to go outside to go to the bathroom.

My grandparents live in Lemont Furnace. That is a small town that used to be a coal mining town but there is no mining there now. There are about 20 houses there. You can still see the company store building there but it is empty. They call Lemont Furnace the "patch."

Henry Tallentire enjoyed the oral history project that he completed and most of all he was glad to record a part of history that might have been forgotten. We hope that you too have enjoyed your oral history experience.